

Please be aware that Sinclair Broadcasting is making an unprecedented decision to force all their affiliates to air over public air waves a politically charged, partisan movie that slurs John Kerry's war service in Vietnam. This inflammatory mockumentary is presented from one perspective from dubious sources without providing equal time to an alternate view of the same subject. And based on its timing, it is a clear and brazen attempt to try to impact the 2004 presidential election in violation of the public trust that their affiliates are obligated by license to protect.

Sinclair Broadcast Group's recent actions have illustrated the dangers of media consolidation. (See new York Times Editorial Excerpt below.)

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies, like Sinclair control the airwaves, we are at risk, as we see in this case, of the partisanship of a few media executives trumping fair-play. And all this at the public's expense.

There is no need to remind you of the impact that the radio and television media have on public opinion in America today. The FCC has an obligation to make sure that the airwaves are used by their licensees in a fair and balanced manner. The publicly-owned airwaves must be a level playing field when it comes to our democratic process. Sinclair has chosen to violate this trust in their recent actions, and with much bluster continue to insist that they will pursue this path in the future.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard.

I would encourage the FCC to examine each of Sinclair's affiliate's licenses very carefully as they come up for renewal, and take appropriate action to ensure that Sinclair does not misuse their licensed trusts to further their partisan one-sided interests in the future.

Thank you.

NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL "DANGEROUS TERRITORY" 10/15/2004

"If the company is thinking about seriously changing course, it should do it quickly. Sinclair is in dangerous territory. If television companies force their local stations to campaign blatantly, it will not be long before the administrations that have the power to grant licenses begin expecting such favors as a quid pro quo. And the public will question whether it can afford to allow such concentrations of power in the hands of huge media corporations."